

## **Patience Island Narragansett Bay Research Reserve**

### Background

This 207-acre island lies to the west of northern Prudence Island. At their closest, the two islands are only 900 feet apart. The Patience Island is dominated by tall shrubs interspersed with red cedar and black cherry. Common shrubs include bayberry, highbush blueberry, and shadbush. Much of the island is also covered by brier, Asiatic bittersweet and poison ivy. A deciduous forest is gradually replacing the shrub habitat in some parts of the island. The small salt marsh on the southeastern shore provides habitat for seablite, a plant species common in other areas of the country, but rare in Rhode Island. The upland area of Patience Island supports a variety of wildlife including white-tailed deer, red fox, and Eastern cottontail rabbits. Coastal areas are used extensively by migrant and wintering waterfowl species such as horned grebes, greater scaup, black ducks and scoters. Quahogs are abundant in the sandy sediment.

There is no ferry service available to this island. Visitors are welcome but you must provide your own transportation. Be aware that there is a high population of ticks, the trails may be overgrown, and camping is not permitted.



### History of Patience Island

Historically, the Patience Island Farm covered an area of approximately 200 acres, nearly the entire island, and was a working farm as early as the mid-seventeenth century. The farm buildings were burned by the British during the Revolutionary War. After the war, the buildings were rebuilt and the farm remained in operation until the early twentieth century. During the 1960s, construction was undertaken to create a summer resort colony on the island. The colony was never completed; however the construction did considerable damage to the sites of the early farm buildings.

The foundation of an oysterman's house along the northwest shore is another archaeological site on the island. This house site probably dates back to the late eighteenth century when oysterbeds were leased in the upper bay. The small building was the home of a watchman for the oysterbeds located just off Patience Island. The foundation of the house remains in good condition with little disturbance.